

IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE OF SEBASTIAN COUNTY,
ARKANSAS

FILED

MAR 19 2020

IN THE MATTER OF RESTRICTED ACCESS
TO COUNTY FACILITIES TO PROTECT THE
HEALTH OF COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND
THE PUBLIC

SHARON BROOKS
Sebastian County Clerk & Recorder
BY nb

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-1

WHEREAS, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmission and presents with symptoms similar to those of influenza; and

WHEREAS, in late 2019, a new and significant outbreak of COVID-19 emerged in China; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern; and

WHEREAS, in response to the recent COVID-19 outbreak in China, Iran, Italy and South Korea, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, ("CDC") has deemed it necessary to prohibit or restrict non-essential travel to or from those countries; and

WHEREAS, in response to the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Japan, the CDC has advised older travelers and those with chronic medical conditions to avoid nonessential travel and all travelers to exercise enhanced precautions; and

WHEREAS, the CDC currently recommends community preparedness and everyday prevention measures be taken by individuals and families in the United States, including voluntary home isolation when individuals are sick with respiratory symptoms, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue and disposal of the tissue immediately thereafter, washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers with 60%-95% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available and routinely cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects to increase community resilience and readiness for responding to an outbreak; and

WHEREAS, individuals in the State of Arkansas have tested positive with COVID-19 and additional individuals are presumptively positive with COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the CDC currently recommends mitigation measures in communities with COVID-19 cases, including staying at home when sick, keeping away from others who are sick and staying at home when a household member is sick with respiratory disease symptoms or if instructed to do so by public health officials or a health care provider; and

WHEREAS, Sebastian County must ensure, as best as can be reasonably accomplished, the health and safety of county employees and the public served by Sebastian County, and to provide for continued services by Sebastian County to our public. This order is entered following consultation with health professionals and officials knowledgeable in the current state of affairs and preventative medicine.

NOW THEREFORE, I, David Hudson, Sebastian County Judge, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Amendment 55, Section 3 of the Arkansas Constitution, as the chief executive of Sebastian County and the custodian of county property, and all other applicable laws, promulgate the following Executive Order to take effect Friday, March 20, 2020 at 7:00 A.M.:

Public Access to the Sebastian County Courthouse 35 south 6th street, Sebastian County Courts Building, Greenwood Courthouse and the Courthouse Annex at 4th and Parker is restricted on an ongoing basis, to limit public exposure to COVID-19.

Access to each listed building is restricted. County Employees, Court Employees and Elected Officials having offices in or conducting business in the respective buildings shall modify office operations to limit public access to those buildings while continuing to provide public service.

In the event that COVID-19 circumstances warrant, these access guidelines will be modified as appropriate.

Courts operating policies implemented by the coordinated action of the Chief Administrative Judge are attached (see enclosure).

Business should be conducted digitally, by phone, email, online or video conference, if at all possible. If not possible, individuals needing to conduct in person business with county offices should contact the responsible office to discuss their needs. Business that is not time sensitive should be postponed, if at all possible.

County and court employees will report to work as scheduled, unless they or a member of their household is sick, or feeling ill, and the same must be reported to their supervisor. All are strongly recommended to practice good personal hygiene, including but not limited to, regularly washing hands with soap and warm water. Social distancing is also recommended.

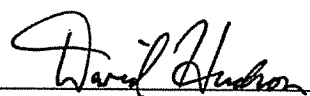
The following instructions are mandatory for all county departments reporting to the office of County Judge. Other elected officials supervising the operation of county departments and personnel are encouraged to follow suit. Each supervisor must identify:

- Critical functions that must remain operational;
- Personnel where physical presence is required to remain operational;
- Personnel who self-identify as having a heightened risk of adverse health outcomes (over 60/65 and/or immune compromised persons);
- Identify back-up personnel for every person essential to remain operational.

We must strive to provide uninterrupted essential services; however, we must meet these demands in a way that balance our operations with the public health.

All personnel reporting to their office must use heightened awareness and take caution to protect personal health and hygiene, and to protect the health of members of their household. Social distancing should be practiced, unless impossible to carry out essential functions.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



David Hudson
County Judge

Please take note of the following adjustments in the operation of Sebastian County Circuit Court, Fort Smith District Court and Greenwood District Court in response to the Coronavirus emergency. These adjustments are made after consultation with public health officials. Effective immediately and extending through May 1, 2020, only essential court hearings will take place at the Sebastian County Courts Building and the Greenwood Courthouse. Essential court is categorized as those designated by statute as such as well as those designated by the respective presiding judges, with guidance from a statement issued by Chief Justice Kemp. For our purposes, the list of essential court is as follow

CIRCUIT COURT

- Arraignments of incarcerated defendants
- Juvenile Court detention hearings
- Dependency Neglect Probable Cause hearings
- Ex Parte Orders
- Protective Orders
- Mental Illness Commitments

FORT SMITH DISTRICT COURT

- Arraignments of incarcerated defendants
- Judge O'Hern's Wednesday morning eviction docket, which will be transitioned to hearings by the Zoom program as soon as possible

GREENWOOD DISTRICT COURT

- Arraignments of incarcerated defendants
- Civil cases which may be heard by telephone conference may proceed with coordination through the office of the presiding judge. Agreed Orders may of course still be submitted and uncontested divorces may be submitted by interrogatories or affidavit. All other matters set for hearing or trial May 1 or prior will be rescheduled. As much as possible please handle filings and other business with the Circuit Clerk, District Clerk and the Courts by fax, email or telephone.

Also, persons paying fines or restitution to District Court or through the Prosecuting Attorney's Office are encouraged to do so by mail or online. Those who appear in person to pay will be directed by staff to make payments by those methods until business as usual resumes.

In addition, effective immediately the Circuit Clerks Office will waive any fees associated with the fax filing of pleadings until May 1, 2020. It is requested new case filings be mailed to either 901 S B Street, Suite 205 or POB 1179, Fort Smith, AR 72902, to reduce the amount of persons coming into the Courts Building.